

Consular Round Up



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Ambassador Cunningham Meets with Embassy Wardens



Ambassador Cunningham

Ambassador James Cunningham met with 28 American wardens from across Israel at U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv on April 14. He spoke about U.S.-Israel relations, the peace process, the situation in Gaza and U.S. foreign policy on Iraq and Iran.

The wardens, all volunteers, were updated on American Citizen Services by the Consul General and the American Citizen Services Chief. In addition, the Regional Security Officer and the Assistant Army Attaché described their experiences in crisis situations and gave tips on how to be prepared for an emergency.

“Wardens are an integral part of our Embassy community,” the American Citizen Services Chief said. “They assist the Consular Section in disaster preparedness by alerting U.S. citizens to emergency situations. We’re lucky to have such a great team supporting our work.”

The term “warden” originated in World War II when air raid wardens alerted the public to danger.

American Citizens: Don't Forget to Register with the Embassy!

Travel registration is a free service provided by the U.S. government to Americans who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country.

Why register?

Registering allows American citizens to record information about their presence overseas so the State Department may contact and assist them in emergency or crisis situations.

Register online at: travel-registration.state.gov/.

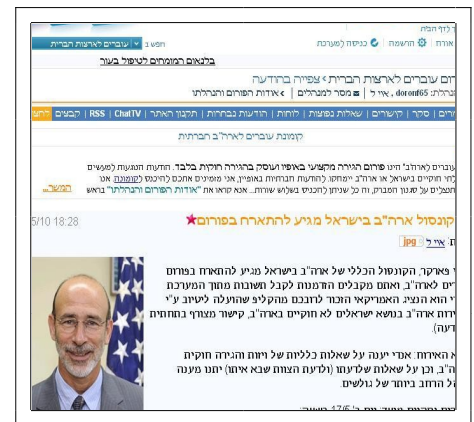


Consul General Holds Live Web Chat at Tapuz Headquarters

For the second time this year, Consul General Andrew Parker held a consular-related web chat on a popular online portal, Tapuz.co.il.

Tapuz, one of Israel's most visited websites, hosted the Consul General on its popular “Traveling to the U.S.” forum.

Along with Embassy press and consular staff, the Consul General responded to questions on topics ranging from visas and travel to the United States, to post-doctoral study, same-sex marriage and its implications for family travel, and post-army Israelis' requests for tourist visas.



Embassy Hosts Voting Workshops for American Citizens



American Citizen Services hosted several voting workshops for American citizens on May 17. More than 100 attendees learned how to register and vote via absentee ballot.

The 2010 U.S. mid-term elections will be held Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2010. All 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and 36 out of 100 seats in the U.S. Senate will be contested this year.

For more information on voting, visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program at www.fvap.gov.



Jewish Agency for Israel Visits Embassy Tel Aviv

The visa section invited staff from the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) to visit Embassy Tel Aviv in May.

Several consular officers met with Ilan Wagner, the Director of Market Engagement for North America, and other staff from the agency's Education Department.

Visa staff learned about JAFI's cultural exchange programs, specifically the summer *shlichim* program, which sends thousands of Israeli youth to summer camps across America each year as camp counselors.

JAFI's exchange programs comprise a significant number of the exchange visitor visas the Embassy adjudicates each year.



Did you Know?

More than 8,000 youths apply for the *shlichim* program each year. Only 1,000-1,200 are accepted.

Consular Section Stresses 'J' Visa Compliance

One of the Embassy's Vice Consuls spoke to more than 200 exchange visitor (J) visa applicants at the American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise's (AICE) annual seminar on May 16.

AICE sponsors hundreds of Israeli youth who participate in cultural exchanges to the United States as summer camp counselors.

The Vice Consul spoke about exchange visitor visa requirements, answered questions about the application process and stressed the importance of abiding by the terms of all U.S. visas.

Visa abuse, such as working at American mall kiosks on a tourist visa, or after the J visa program's expiration, may result in the visa's revocation and the visa holder being barred from entering the United States for a number of years.

Easing of U.S. HIV Rule Benefits Applicants

Due to recent changes to U.S. immigration rules, HIV-positive visa applicants are no longer required to answer "yes" to the DS-160 application question: "Have you ever been afflicted with a communicable disease of public health significance?"

Last year, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published a final rule that removed HIV from the list of communicable diseases of public health significance.

Visa Application Fees Increase

The Department of State announced increases in non-immigrant visa application (Machine Readable Visa (MRV)) fees, effective June 4, 2010.

The new fees are:

- **USD \$140** for B1/B2 (business/tourism), F, M and J visas (student and exchange visitors);
- **USD \$150** for H, L, O, P, Q, R (petition-based visas);
- **USD \$390** for E (treaty trader/investor visas).

Applicants who paid the former USD \$131 fee and have an appointment scheduled at the Embassy after June 4 must pay the USD equivalent difference at any Israeli post office branch before the interview.

Applicants will not be admitted to the waiting room until the entire MRV fee is paid.

Reminder: Visa Applications Must Contain Valid Photograph



Example of an invalid photograph, excerpted from a DS-160 application.

When completing the DS-160 visa application (with or without assistance from a third party), applicants must upload a valid photograph of themselves.

The Consular Section has recently seen many DS-160s containing photos of celebrities such as George Clooney and Brad Pitt, instead of the applicant.

The Consular Section reminds applicants that clicking the "submit" button creates your electronic signature, certifying that all information contained in the application is true and correct, including the photo.

Learn more about DS-160 photo requirements at: http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/frvi_3877.html.

Become an Embassy Tel Aviv Facebook Fan

The Consular Section recently launched a Facebook page to release news and updates on consular policies.

American citizens, visa applicants and anyone interested in Embassy news are encouraged to become a fan.

Our newest feature is the opportunity to "Ask the Consul."

Facebook fans can post questions about the visa application process or U.S. citizen services to the wall. Consular staff will select one or more questions and post answers weekly.

To join, log in to your Facebook account and click on: www.facebook.com/ConsularSectionUSEmbassyTelAviv.



How Long Will it Take to Receive My Visa?

Travelers to the United States are strongly encouraged to schedule visa interviews well in advance of travel plans.

The Consular Section is in the midst of peak demand during the summer months. The current wait time for appointments is 21 days.

Also, once your visa is approved, it will take a least seven business days to arrive from the post office.

The State Department website displays visa appointment wait times for all non-immigrant visa processing posts.

View wait times at http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/wait/wait_4638.html.

Vice Consul Leads Crisis Management Exercise

The entire Consular Section conducted a large-scale crisis management exercise with more than 50 participants last March. Consular staff fielded emergency calls, drafted warden messages and learned how to implement crisis procedures.

The exercise's primary goal was to overwhelm the teams, simulating a real crisis. By challenging everyone to participate fully in a crisis situation, consular staff gained experience in communicating effectively under pressure. The Consular Section already has implemented many of the day's lessons and strengthened its ability to respond to a consular crisis.

Israel has its share of crises and the Consular Section plays an important role in aiding American citizens. Recent crises include the evacuations of American citizens and their families during Operation Cast Lead and the aftermath of the Gaza flotillas.

Consular Officers Discuss Careers in the Foreign Service



Deputy Chief of Mission speaks to students

Former Deputy Chief of Mission Luis Moreno recently welcomed more than 40 American graduate students and young professionals to an open house on careers in the U.S. Foreign Service, hosted by the Embassy's New Professionals Association.

A panel of entry-level officers, including several Vice Consuls, discussed how to join and build a career in the Foreign Service.

Representatives from other Embassy offices, including the Economic and Political Sections, spoke about their work and its challenges.

Learn more about career opportunities with the U.S. Department of State at <http://careers.state.gov/>.

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